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Search for Common Ground

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Program Overview – SFCG DRC

SFCG established its country program in the DRC in 2001. With now six offices across the country, SFCG uses media tools and innovative theater programs, trains leaders and organizes public dialogues and events to provide information, foster dialogue, and strengthen the capacity of local actors to address key issues faced by the country. SFCG also maintains a network of 85 radio stations across the country , and each week produces fourteen enormously popular radio programs to restore peace and democracy in the country.

SFCG has been particularly active in consolidating the gains made by the 2006 elections, supporting good governance and accountability efforts across the country. SFCG also seeks to facilitate informed refugee repatriation and reintegration, prevent sexual and gender-based violence, and reduce human rights violations committed by the Congolese military. SFCG DRC has a particular focus on the transformation of local conflits. Within the next years, SFCG aims to expand its activities in the mineral sector and the police sector.

1) Youth Approach

SFCG in the DRC believes that Congolese youth have a key role to play to support peace and democratic processes throughout the country. SFCG is implementing various media projects aiming at engaging youth in positive participation in DRC's new democracy, including a TV reality show (*Tosalel'ango*) using an innovative format featuring two Congolese youth each week as they attempt to make a change for the better in their communities, and radio programs that deal primarily with youth issues, such as *Uishi na Upende*, produced for youth between 15 and 25 years old and aims to help youth talk seriously about relationships and how to avoid the risks of violence and exploitation.

2) Gender Approach

Women have been particularly affected by conflicts in the DRC. SFCG is thus particularly targeting women's issues throughout the country through a variety of communication tools (media program, mobile cinema, etc.) aiming to raise awareness and shift attitudes of community members and key opinion leaders to favor their engagement in combating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). SFCG has recently launched, with support from the British government, a new campaign, *"Est-il un vrai djo?"* (Is he a real man?) to promote positive male role models in the fight against SGBV through the broadcast of TV and radio spots and public screenings.

3) Supporting Security Sector Reform

Years of war and insecurity in the DRC, in which members of the various armed forces have committed human rights abuses, have had a negative impact on military-civilian relations. SFCG in the DRC supports the ongoing Security Sector Reform in collaboration with the Congolese army, with the aim to reinforce their respect of human rights, enhance their conflict transformation skills, and improve military-civilian relations. To achieve this objective, SFCG uses a wide range of tools,

including trainings of in-force educators to carry out awareness-raising on human rights and conflict transformation, media and outreach tools (radio program, comic book, participatory theatre, mobile cinema), as well as sports, culture, and solidarity joint activities bringing together civilians and military to improve relations and promote peaceful cohesion among the two groups. SFCG has also started working with the Police Nationale Congolaise on similar issues.

4) Democracy and Governance

In the context of the DRC's new democracy and young institutions, SFCG works towards improving information access and dialogue among Congolese citizens, media, civil society and their elected leaders. SFCG is producing a series of radio and TV programs, including magazines and dramas, to raise awareness amongst citizens on democratic principles. SFCG is also training journalists in Common Ground approaches to governance programs and supporting civil society's monitoring of delivery of basic services to foster links between policy makers, civil society and the media on issues of governance.

SFCG is also supporting the current electoral process through a spot campaign with nationwide broadcast and a song competition promoting non-violence and peaceful participation in the elections.

5) Repatriation

Since 2004, more than 220,000 Congolese national have been repatriated to the DRC. SFCG has partnered with UNHCR and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration since 2006 to foster peaceful reintegration of Congolese returnees in the DRC. SFCG aims in particular to provide information that enables refugees to make informed decisions about return and to foster dialogue and collaborative approaches to conflict between returnees and residents in the zones of return.

SFCG and its local partners undertake community projects and youth activities, in the Kivu and in Equateur, aimed at reducing conflict among returning displaced populations and their communities. SFCG also reaches out to displaced populations through radio programming and participatory theatre.

6) Regional Approach

SFCG program in the DRC is an integral part of the organization's larger regional focus. SFCG has developed a regional strategy in the Great Lakes, taking into account the dual character of the conflicts in the region: both local/national and with regional dimension. SFCG in the region seeks to inspire key people from diverse groups to become actors for social change and actively contribute to both peace and reconciliation in their communities.

SFCG is currently participating in several projects with a regional dimension, including:

- a project funded by USAID that aims to strengthening repatriation, and reintegration through information and conflict transformation in Burundi, and Eastern DRC; and

- a project funded by USAID entitled Supporting Trading For Peace in the Great Lakes, which overall goal is for trade routes between Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda to be more secure for regional economic activities;
- a media and outreach initiative funded by the Swedish government that aims to support civil society engagement in peace and security issues in the Great Lakes.

TOOLBOX:

The tools used by SFCG in the DRC are complementary and diverse:

- ✓ Media tools: TV and radio spots, sketches, reality shows, soap operas, competitions, and listening clubs;
- ✓ Community tools: workshops and trainings, round tables and exchanges, participatory theatre, mobile cinema, solidarity events, joint civil-military activities, cultural days, concerts, and community projects;
- ✓ Monitoring & evaluation.